



## **Ketchikan Pulp Company Site Ward Cove Sediment Remediation Project Ketchikan, Alaska**

April 2000

# **EPA Chooses Final Cleanup Plan for Ward Cove Sediments**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has decided how it will deal with contaminated sediments in Ward Cove. EPA's decision is documented in a Record of Decision, or ROD, that was signed on March 29, 2000. The ROD describes the final cleanup plan for sediments in Ward Cove that were impacted by historical releases from the Ketchikan Pulp Company (KPC) site, and responds to public comments that were received on EPA's earlier Proposed Plan for cleanup.

The ROD will be available at the locations listed on page 3 by mid-April. This ROD deals with the Marine Operable Unit of the KPC site, also called the Ward Cove Sediment Remediation Project. A separate ROD for the Uplands Unit, which covers the KPC mill site and other affected areas, is under development now.

### **EPA Selects the Remedy for Contaminated Sediments**

EPA has selected a cleanup plan for about 80 acres of bottom sediments in Ward Cove. The contaminated sediments that will be cleaned up were impacted by historical releases from the KPC site and they are toxic to some marine animals that live in bottom sediments. The objective of the cleanup is to reduce toxicity of sediments to the bottom-dwelling animals, and to enhance recolonization of the bottom sediments to support a healthy community of marine animals. EPA has determined that the contaminated sediments are not toxic to human health or to birds and mammals living in the Cove.

EPA has selected a combination of thin-layer capping with clean sand, mounding with clean sand, navigational dredging of contaminated sediments, and natural recovery as the remedy to clean up the contaminated bottom sediments.

Under EPA's plan, thin-layer capping and mounding will be done in every place that it is practicable. About 22 acres of the Cove's bottom will be covered with a 6 to 12 inch cap of clean, sandy material. Another 6 acres will be covered with clean sediment mounds. Also, navigational

dredging of contaminated sediments will occur in about 3 acres in front of the main dock facility, and about 1 acre near the northeast corner of the Cove. Dredged sediments will be disposed of at an upland location (e.g., landfill). The remaining area, about 50 acres, cannot be capped or mounded because it is too steep or too deep, is covered with very dense piles of sunken logs, or has bottom sediments that don't have the strength to support a cap or mound. Natural recovery is the remedy for this area.

Additionally, a subtidal investigation will be performed near the east end of the main dock, where sediments may be contaminated with PAHs (polyaromatic hydrocarbons), and appropriate next steps will be taken.

After cleanup, long-term monitoring of the cove sediments will take place until cleanup objectives are met. EPA will require monitoring of sediment toxicity and benthic infaunal community structure to measure progress towards achieving these cleanup objectives.

An "institutional control" is in place to require repairs should future activities damage the cap



or mounds. As an example, if a dredging project exposes a substantial area of non-native contaminated sediments and thus hinders the recovery of the community of bottom-dwelling animals, then the current owner of the sediments will be required to replace the cap or mounds in the exposed areas.

A review of the remedy will be conducted within 5 years after cleanup to make sure that the remedy continues to adequately protect the environment.

### **Why did EPA choose this remedy?**

EPA selected this remedy after considering various cleanup alternatives, and evaluating them against specific criteria under EPA's Superfund Program. EPA found that the selected remedy is protective of the environment, complies with relevant state and federal requirements, and is cost-effective. These evaluations are described in greater detail in the Proposed Plan (issued last July) and in the ROD.

EPA did not choose to treat the contaminated sediments at this site. Given site-specific characteristics of Ward Cove and the type of contaminated sediments, treatment technologies are not considered feasible. They would be difficult to implement, and would be extremely costly while producing little or no environmental benefit within Ward Cove.

In July 1999, EPA encouraged the public to comment on the preferred cleanup alternative that EPA described in its Proposed Plan for the Marine Operable Unit. A public meeting and availability session were held in Ketchikan in July, and EPA accepted comments until September 9, 1999. EPA received 12 comment letters, two comment cards, and verbal comments from four individuals.

Public comments generally supported the proposed sediment cleanup for Ward Cove. Commenters generally agreed that there are no significant, long-term risks to human health or wildlife in Ward Cove. Commenters also generally agreed that capping or mounding is

an appropriate remedy for the types of sediments and contaminants found in the cove. The comments also raised some questions and concerns, particularly with respect to long-term monitoring efforts in the Cove. All comments were considered in the development of the final decision. **EPA's responses to all public comments can be found in the Responsiveness Summary, which is included in the ROD.**

### **What Happens Next?**

KPC will perform the sediment cleanup in Ward Cove, and EPA will perform oversight of KPC's work. EPA intends to complete the sediment cleanup project under the authority of the federal Superfund law. Thus, EPA has started negotiating a legal agreement with KPC, its parent company, Louisiana-Pacific Corporation, and the new owner of the Ward Cove facility, Gateway Forest Products, Inc. This legal agreement is called a Superfund Remedial Design/Remedial Action consent decree.

At this time, it is expected that the construction phase of the cleanup project in Ward Cove will begin in November or December 2000. The work is expected to be completed within one year.



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**For More Information:**

**The Record of Decision, which includes the Responsiveness Summary, and other documents related to the KPC Project can be found at the following locations:**

Ketchikan Public Library  
629 Dock Street

Ketchikan ADEC Office  
340 Water Street

Juneau ADEC Office  
410 Willoughby Avenue

EPA Records Center  
1200 Sixth Avenue, 7th Floor, Seattle

**If you have questions, please contact:**

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**KETCHIKAN PULP COMPANY SITE**  
*Ketchikan, Alaska*